1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

mony the boys returned to their hunting band and resumed their previous status.

Among the net hunters the Mbuti boys do not participate fully in the proceedings of the *molimo* society until they have proved their prowess as hunters. Putnam does not mention any such elaborate ceremony as that described by Schebesta for the archers, to mark the killing of his first game by a youth, but such an event is simply received among the net hunters with much acclaim and, if possible, feasting and dancing. It may also be accompanied by the cutting of the tattoo marks on the boy's forehead.

It seems that with the net hunters the *nkūmbi* serves merely to give status in villager society. The Mbuti have different forms of initiation into the religious associations of their own men and women; the *molimo* and *elima*, respectively. They are, at least, forms of initiation practiced

[P. 219 - B]

[P. 256-C]

to their previous status in the Pygmy camp and even returned to the care and authority of their mothers. None of these boys was allowed to take part in subsequent meetings of the *molimo*. The reason—they were not "hunters," they had not killed "real animals" (i.e., animals large enough to be worth distributing among the band, as opposed to the small animals caught by children and that are not worth dividing except within the family). To kill "real animals," usually antelope, a boy must be old enough to be allowed to wander away from his father during the hunt and to try his luck at either end of the semicircle of nets, where animals might escape and be shot with bow and arrow, speared, or caught with the hands. 575 881 882 885 224 [575]

Entry into the *molimo* therefore depends on a combination of physical growth and prowess. Boys seem to qualify by the time they reach the age of 14. Once a member, one is a full member; there is no hierarchy within the *molimo*; like the *elima* it is a religious association without priests. There is no ritual to be performed; all members play the same part in the meetings of the association with the exception of one who is delegated to play the *molimo* horn. The choice invariably falls on the best performer present, without regard for age or other qualifications. 575 885

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Mbuti

[P. 257-A]

For the net hunters, the *molimo* is their only means of dealing with the unknown, with situations for which they have no practical, immediately effective remedy. Individuals may and do indulge in the spontaneous practice of sympathetic magic, but this is informal and unsystematized. The *molimo* (and the *elima* to a lesser extent) may be considered "magical" in that the meeting of the association in proper circumstances is believed to restore normality to a situation that has in some way deviated. The "proper circumstances" to which I refer seem to be the non-participation of women and children, the attendance of all adult male members of the band, the use of special songs and the *molimo* horn, persistence in nocturnal meetings of the association, and constant reiteration of the songs until normality is restored. As far as is known, although certainty is lacking, the meeting of the association, which may last for a month, is not accompanied by any taboos on hunting or gathering, eating, or sexual activity. Some doubt exists also as to the position of women with regard to the *molimo*.

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Mbuti

With the *elima* it is similar. All adult women are members, and participation is compulsory in one's own camp or when visiting another. Communication with the forest God is again established by means of songs, special and sacred to the *elima*. However, the men take part. The *elima* meets on occasions of major concern to womenfolk—birth, arrival at the age of puberty, marriage, and death. Thus at birth and death, both the *elima* and the *molimo* are concerned. (As mentioned, however, the occasion of birth is little marked by ritual of any kind.) Both associations meet in the forest camp but out of sight of each other. The *elima* meets in the large *elima* hut or in a cluster of neighboring huts. Young children may be present. The exception, when the men take part in the meeting of the *elima*, is during the initiation of a girl.

In the survey we give an account of *elima* initiation (p. 216). If the *nkumbi* is not the initiation into the *molimo*, we must look elsewhere for this. When a boy kills his first "real animal," he is immediately acclaimed as a hunter, and

[P. 257-D]

[P. 258-A]

881 hunters are *de facto* members of the *molimo*. I
885 have never witnessed nor been told of any for-
224 mal rite introducing the new hunter to the asso-
575 ciation, and I do not believe that there is any such rite. The boy already knows all the *molimo* songs and has probably been allowed, for the past year or so, to sit with the men during the informal meetings of the association. The only
881 act that might be regarded as a formal token of
885 initiation is the cutting of three sets of three
304 vertical slits in the flesh of the forehead, each
575 side of the eyes or above the eyebrows, and above the nose. The flesh is gouged out with an arrow, and a black paste is rubbed in. The wound heals smoothly, leaving black streaks under the skin. The operation is performed without any formality by one of the "great hunters," that is, one who has killed buffalo or elephant. The initiate, if he can be called such, becomes the immediate object of interest to the womenfolk, as he is now considered marriageable. But the marks themselves do not qualify him for membership in the *molimo*, nor does their absence debar him from taking part. All that seems to be required is public recognition of his having killed "real game," marked by the kind of feasting and dancing that always follows a particularly successful hunt.

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

PLATE 26 [illegible]

Pygmy Physical Types, Epulu District, Central Ituri

888 142 [292] a. An Mbuti elder. Too old to be a successful hunter, he can be sure of food and shelter, provided by the younger generation of hunters, for as long as he lives. The genet skin hat is not a formal indication of status, but, effectively, only elders are likely to wear hats of any kind.

142 885 576 [304] [201] b. An Mbuti hunter, upon whom, together with his wife, falls the main burden of providing for young and old. He will address the elders as "mother" and "father," regardless of actual kinship considerations, and he will have toward them all the same obligations that he has toward his biological parents. The hand gesture, a snapping of the fingers onto the palm, is used in conversation as an indication of speed or sudden activity.

[illegible], /Plate 26 appears on page 285--Analyst/

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1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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/Plate 26-B/

/Caption appears on p. 284/

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

PLATE 28 1/

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PYGMY PHYSICAL TYPES, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

a. An Mbuti hunter and child. Every child has a father in every hunter, even in such a case as this, in which the child's mother was a member of the band until she married a villager, who fathered the boy. Such children are brought up in the village, as villagers, and never become members of an Mbuti band, however much affection they might receive when the hunters visit the village.

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b. A youth, shortly to become a hunter. He will already be assuming the responsibilities of adulthood, though he is unlikely to own a hunting net of his own until he is married. Elbow clapping is a major means of signaling through the forest. By flexing the elbow against the side of the chest the sound box is enlarged or compressed, causing a variation in pitch, which, when combined with rhythmic variations, allows for the sending of reasonably complex messages. The result of a hunt can be quickly relayed back to the camp in this way.

1/ /Plate 28 appears on page 289--Analyst/

[P.288]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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/Plate 28-B/

/Caption appears on p.288/

[P.289-B]

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

ultimate if not immediate control. It is more difficult to see what the Mbuti get out of it, except for certain economic advantages which are meant to be reciprocal. Looking at it briefly from the Mbuti point of view, however, we see that the advantages are perhaps more real than those accruing to the villagers. For the villagers are bound by their own sanctions, and therefore the Mbuti can make demands of his *karé* with reasonable assurance that they will be met. Also, he can now expect a succession of relatively lavish ceremonies to be prepared for him as he goes through life, at the expense of his *karé* and *kpara*. The feasting involved may seem a trivial gain for the Mbuti, but in fact it is one of their major sources of entertainment and relaxation. The *nkumbi* extends the Mbuti's economic and political horizons just as it does those of the villagers, and the Mbuti know how to reap the advantages, just as they know how to avoid most of the disadvantages. This avoidance in fact forms one of the important features of the over-all structure of their society.

One final advantage that should be mentioned, though its importance is perhaps more personal than social, is that only by participation in the *nkumbi*, or its equivalent among tribes with other forms of initiation into manhood, can the Mbuti become a man in the eyes of the villagers. There is a strongly paternalistic attitude held by villagers toward their Mbuti that is resented by the hunters, who consider themselves more manly than the villagers. The *nkumbi* at least offers them an opportunity for proving their manliness to the villagers, and it sometimes develops into a contest between the Mbuti and the village initiates. And only by participation in the *nkumbi* can the Mbuti acquire the right to be addressed as adults, admitted to the adult *baraza*, and accorded other adult privileges when in the village.

ELIMA

The villagers do not attempt to exert supernatural control through the women, as they do through the men. While the Mbuti men have nothing comparable to the *nkumbi* initiation of the villagers, the Mbuti women, in the forest world, do have a recognizable and formal way of acknowledging the puberty of a girl. They give it the same name as the villagers (the Bira call it *elima*, the Lesé *peipa*) and in its outer form it appears roughly similar; the occasion at least is the same,

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

857 868 [883] them. Youths join the older children at this game, but never in a supervisory capacity.

883 561 868 882 Youths may also join the children on their swings in the *bopi*, and will almost certainly build their swings for them, climbing high up into adjacent trees to drape a long liana between them. They then teach the younger children the wild somersaulting games on these swings that are particularly characteristic of the honey season. On the other side the youths equally often join the hunters but, again, always as a separate group, sometimes participating fully, but still as youths. And as youths they continue the process already begun in childhood, of growing more away from their nuclear families and together as an age group. Their hunting and scavenging abilities are greater, and they sometimes even maintain a self-sufficient food economy. As youths they are allowed to stay up at night, instead of retiring with their mothers, and they build their own fire near the hunters' fire and cook their own food and sing and dance, sometimes with the hunters and elders, sometimes separately.

882 As youths they are also given increasing responsibility, especially in the economic life of the band. They may listen to the discussions of the hunters and elders, but even if they make comments, as they do, they are not readily listened to unless it is a matter pertaining to their age group. Then they are required to be able to voice their opinions and cite precedents. They are expected to show an adult sense [232] of responsibility in matters concerning sex and marriage, and although [836] they may flirt quite openly and even audaciously, they never "play house," and not until after the *elima* will a girl again show her favor [584] by cooking for a boy. Then it is tantamount to an admission of betrothal.

224 884 • 885 56 [422] [581] After marriage a boy acquires a net. It may be made for him by his mother, or his father may give him part of his net to which he will add, with his wife's help. He has already demonstrated his hunting prowess or he would not be married, but now he is a full hunter with additional responsibilities. Whereas economic activity is shared between the hunters and youths, it is the hunters who ultimately make the decisions concerning camp life, and about the hunt. Where to go for the daily hunt, when to move camp, to what region, how to deal with threats of physical danger, and how to surmount physical problems; such are the questions the hunter has to face. They all concern 88 the band as a whole. Nonphysical dangers and problems—that is to 56 say, moral, psychological and spiritual issues, those that affect the

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

nuclear family often before the band—these are more the concern of the elders. As we are here considering the normal run of daily life we are leaving aside special occasions such as the *elima* and *molimo* festivals, which are primarily religious in nature, but in which the hunters and youths play their own distinct parts together with the elders.

The hunters are generally in the middle of any dispute that occurs, but in a serious dispute it is more likely to be an elder that will be able to effect a settlement. It is, however, the disputes of the hunters that establish the lines along which fission and fusion will take place, and the elders have little influence over this process, nor do they even seem to wish to influence it. They content themselves by using the respect that is accorded them to maintain some kind of balance between the band factions. It is the hunters who initiate both fission and fusion, and who are thus responsible for the composition of the band. Relationships with neighboring bands and with the villagers, insofar as they are determined by band movement, are also largely in their hands, and in this sense the hunters may be considered the political leaders of the band. In this the women are almost, if not fully, the equals of the men.

The hunter's life is the most active and arduous, and this may in part be responsible for his somewhat disputatious nature. In elderhood there is a chance to relax. There is no shame in an elder having his children bring him back food, and in any case he may be needed to keep an eye on the camp while the hunt is away. It is an age group to which a man or a woman resigns himself with some reluctance, but in which he soon finds considerable satisfaction. He is able to intervene in disputes without fear of physical violence, for one thing, and often does so with enjoyment. The elder is undoubtedly the arbiter, though by no means the only source of solution. From his position of immunity he is able to interfere in the most private and domestic affairs of anyone. Whereas a hunter solves his problems empirically, answering facts with facts, the elder solves those that face him with considered opinion, drawing from a lifetime of experience. A hunter would be laughed at if he could not support an opinion with fact. An elder is never expected to do so, and is consequently admirably fitted to deal with moral and spiritual matters. It is, however, opinion that he offers, not judgment. He will concern himself in questions of the upbringing of children, of their puberty and of their marriage. At any time of major crisis the elder will play the resolving part, though the

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

elsewhere. If this is taken to indicate a lack of concern not only for kinship but also for social stability, it can also be regarded, precisely because of the freedom it allows, as a further mechanism by which the constant flux so characteristic of the band is maintained. That this flux itself has a function will be seen in the final chapter, when we deal again with the Mbuti/Villager relationship.

The different functions of each age level have been described (pp. 110, 111, 112 *seq.*), and the organizational value of making the horizontal distinction in the composite band is self-evident. Each age level is cooperative in activity, certain activities (such as the hunt) calling for cooperation between two or three age levels still preserving the distinction by allocating different roles to each. Interpersonal relations are determined primarily by age level, and authority has also been seen to be diffused through the different levels.

The transition from childhood to youth is marked for boys and girls alike by participation in the *elima*. Adulthood is conveyed by the act of marriage, which carries with it the right to own a net. The rare bachelor who proves himself as a great hunter and still does not marry may, by combined virtue of his age and his skill, own a net, but the accepted qualification is that of marriage, emphasizing another major Mbuti concern, that of procreation.

Transition from adulthood to elderhood is less clear-cut and more filled with tension, for though an elder enjoys many privileges and has, set aside for him as such, certain vital roles in the social organization, he misses the excitement of the hunt, the pride and satisfaction of rearing a family, and he certainly recognizes that this is the final transition.

The nonlineal (or cognatic) band, then, divided horizontally into age levels rather than vertically into lineages, effects an absolute unity throughout each level, whereas it would otherwise be divided into as many sections as there were lineages. Its persistence and continuity are seen in terms of territory. There may well be a tendency for certain lineages to remain within the same territory for successive generations, but such association is incidental rather than structurally determined. The demography and internal organization, while allowing for marriage within the band, make it essential for much marriage exchange to take place between different and preferably not adjacent bands. Since the residence of the newlywed couple is determined by immediate economic considerations, such as the relative size and composition of the two bands, territory is obviously not an individual

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Mbuti

[P.276-G]

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34. A youth, recently initiated, is still considered far from manhood in the forest. Here he helps an older brother set up the net.

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Mbuti

123 It began to rain, and Njobo decided that he was not going to stay
304 and get wet, so he left. Moke was on the point of doing the same
when Kolongo returned. Obviously anxious to get the whole thing
[152] over with as little ceremony as possible and return to his warm dry
hut, he rubbed the black ash-paste hard into the cuts until it filled
them and congealed the blood that still flowed. And there it is today,
ash made from the plants of the forest, a part of the forest that is a
part of the flesh, carried by every self-respecting Pygmy male. And
as long as it is with me it will always call me back.

The women thought it a great joke when I finally got back to
camp, wet and still rather shaky. They crowded around to have a
[152] look and burst into shrieks of laughter. They said that now I was a
• [885] real man with the marks of a hunter, so I would have to get married
and then I would never be able to leave. Moke looked slyly at me.
He had not explained that the marks had quite that significance.

123 It was later that evening when the men were singing that I heard
533 the molimo. By then I had learned to speak the language quite well,
534 and I had heard them discussing whether or not to bring the molimo
out; there was some opposition on the grounds that it was "a thing
of the forest," and not of the village, but old Moke said it was good
for me to hear it before I left, as it would surely not let me stay
long away but would bring me safely back.

First I heard it call out of the night from the other side of the
Nepussi River, where three years earlier I had helped Pat Putnam
build a dam. The dam was still there, though breached by con-
tinuous flooding. The hospital where Pat had given his life lay just
beyond, now an overgrown jungle, only a few crumbling vine-
covered walls left standing, the rest lost in a wilderness of under-
growth. Somewhere over there, in the darkness, the molimo now
called; it sounded like someone singing but it was not a human voice.
It was a deep, gentle, lowing sound, sometimes breaking off into a
quiet falsetto, sometimes growling like a leopard. As the men sang

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

765 123 481 forest in the dark. He said the others would not be able to wait for me if I dropped behind; this was a serious matter. As I hesitated he added, in a loud voice directed at everyone in general, but particularly to Masimongo and Masisi, that the molimo had already sung to me [885] and no harm had come of it. I was after all an adult, and of the forest, so there was no reason why I should not go with the others.

He was still talking as I caught up with Makubasi, who was hanging back to see if I was coming. We jumped into the Lelo, more swollen than ever, and struggled across. The water came up to my waist, nearly up to his shoulders. My shoes filled with sand and grit, but there was no time to take them off. As we made our way through the water the others ducked their heads and washed themselves, and I did the same.

When we climbed out on the far side, Ausu, leading, was halfway up the hill while I was still splashing around trying to find a foothold in the slippery bank. The forest was not dark yet, but it was [487] very silent, and for once no one made a sound as we ran, following the antelope trails, toward the north.

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Mbuti

881 533 *were* women. They sang right through the evening and now and then stood up and danced in a bashful circle around one of the fires. 881 They sang songs whose words had no particular significance, but • 885 which in themselves were of the greatest significance, being songs 533 sung only by adult women. That was why so many of the mothers and grandmothers had assembled, to welcome their daughters into their midst again, no longer as children, but as friends and partners in adult life. Some of the women looked sad, for they knew that [591] this meant that the girls would soon get married, and then they would almost certainly leave to join their husbands in other camps.

881 885 157 Akidinimba was very different from her usual boisterous self. She was still self-assured, and she bounced her breasts up and down as flagrantly as ever, but perhaps she was subdued by the thought that she was no longer the leader of a group of young girls, but only a young and inexperienced member of womanhood, with all the responsibilities this entailed.

881 533 415 Kidaya too was thoughtful. While the others sang Kidaya sat with her back to them, fondling a large clay cooking pot. She tapped on it with her fingers, keeping time to the music. Then she drew it close and held the mouth of the pot against her stomach, bending her head down to listen to the effect. It evidently pleased her, because she continued the experiment by taking hold of her breasts and forcing them into the mouth of the pot, squirming around until she was comfortable. Then she moved her body rhythmically, producing a variety of curious sounds, not only in the tone of the drumming of her hands, but by making sucking noises as the air was forced in and out. When she tired of that she put the pot between her knees, and sang quietly into the mouth of it, getting a deep reverberating effect. This sounded so much like the molimo that the men started, and one of the women turned and said something sharply to Kidaya. 881 Kidaya herself was a little startled and put the pot away from her. 152 302 She relapsed into a thoughtful mood, slowly and deliberately rubbing

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

herself with her hands, wiping off all the beautiful decorations so laboriously painted on her body by her friends. When the singing ended and the girls retired for the night, Akidinimba was still as decorative as when she first appeared, but Kidaya was just a mass of streaked and dirty gray. And there were tears in her eyes.

During the last week the elima battles reached their highest pitch, both sides making the most of the opportunity while it lasted. The elima was, on the surface, a pretty happy-go-lucky affair, and what went on inside the hut was best left to the imagination. But in fact it all had a very definite purpose, and was closely supervised by the watchful eyes of Asofalinda and Mambunia. For the Pygmies, the elima is not just a puberty rite for girls; it is a celebration of adulthood, and just as much for boys as for girls. For Akidinimba and Kidaya certain physical changes had taken place which marked them as women, but for boys there are no such self-evident changes. They have to prove their manhood. Village boys do this by entering the initiation schools, but even though Pygmies enter the same schools, it is for a different purpose, quite unconnected with adulthood as they see it. For them the elima serves the purpose, or at least a part of it.

In the elima, the boy has to show considerable courage to fight his way into the house, after he has been invited. In the last week the women maintain constant guard outside, and they are well supplied with all sorts of ammunition. If they want to keep any particular boy away from their daughters they are perfectly capable of doing it. And when a boy finally succeeds in breaking his way through he still has to face a possible beating from the girls inside. If he has not been invited by having been beaten beforehand, he will certainly have to go through it now.

As well as this, in order to prove himself a man, the boy has to kill "a real animal." That is to say, not a small one, such as a child might kill, but one of the larger antelopes, or even a buffalo, so prov-

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

ing that he is not only capable of feeding his own family but also able to help feed the older members of the group who can no longer fend for themselves.

Once a boy has gained access to the elima hut he may flirt or even sleep with the girl who invited him. The elima gives an opportunity for boys and girls to get to know each other intimately, and such friendships often end in marriage. On the other hand, it gives two lovers a chance to discover that they are unsuited to each other before becoming betrothed officially. From what I was told, by older men and women as well as by the bachelors who took part in this elima, it is even possible to have intercourse, but with certain restrictions. These restrictions must be effective in preventing conception, because nowhere have I ever heard of a girl becoming pregnant in an elima house. A boy may sleep with a girl only if she consents. The tacit consent of her mother has already been given by his having been allowed to gain access to the elima house. If he sleeps with her then he must not leave the house and has to stay there until the festival is over, subject to the same restrictions as the girls. But he may decide on just a mild flirtation. Or he may—and this is considered a master move—simply turn around and leave the house without having paid the slightest attention to any of the girls. Whatever happens, there are always young women, such as Kondabate, to keep an eye on their younger companions and see that they do not get into trouble.

The conclusion of this particular elima was an anticlimax. The Pygmies are not a ritualistically minded people; to them the important thing about any festival is that they should openly express their emotions and accept the realities of whatever situation the festival marks. Instead of living in constant fear of the spirits of the dead, performing elaborate rituals to remove the souls of the departed as far away as possible and as quickly as possible, the Pygmies sing in their memory for months on end, during the molimo. And so,

3t Turnbull E-S (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

during the elima, they sing to celebrate the blessing of potential motherhood conferred on the fortunate girl or girls. The month or two that the festival lasts gives them time to adapt themselves to the new situation, but they have no need for elaborate ritual acts. When the girls appeared that night and sat down with the women, and sang with them before all the camp, that was a formal public acknowledgment of their new status as women. And yet the elima dragged on for several days afterward.

Part of the reason, of course, was that if they ended with a feast, in the tradition of the villagers, the villagers would be so pleased that they would probably contribute most of the food. And so it was in this case. For all other practical purposes the elima had come to an end the night they sang together. But the girls had another reason; they wanted to placate the villagers. Sabani in particular had been extremely upset about the nonorthodox way this elima had been conducted. He, and many others, felt it was wrong for the girls to go wandering about from village to village, sometimes sleeping overnight in camps several miles away. This was unheard of. It was, to the villagers, as though a colony of lepers were wandering at large. But even more they resented the liberties the girls took with village custom. There is a certain dress that village elima girls are meant to wear, because the special leaves of which it is made have the magical power of protection; other dress is ineffective and invites disaster. The Pygmy girls, however, found that the ineffective leaves were far more attractive. As they themselves said, "This plant makes such pretty skirts; why should we make ourselves ugly with that plant? This is a time to rejoice." They also liked to imitate the village boys' initiation, and this so infuriated, and worried, the village traditionalists that they threatened to invoke the most powerful curses on all the girls. And so the girls put on a traditional ending, village style, to appease them.

On a Sunday morning they came out of their house as soon as

3: Tumbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

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881 all the toughening up and education that are needed. Children begin
563 climbing trees sometimes before they can walk. Their muscles de-
866 velop, and they overcome fear in a number of daring tree games.
861 P Adult activities are learned from an early age by observation and
881 imitation, for the Pygmies live an open life. Their life is as open
177 inside their tiny one-room leaf huts as it is in the middle of a forest
866 clearing, and so the children have no need of the sex instruction
861 which forms so large a part of the teaching given to village boys during the nkumbi.

P The Pygmies themselves say that the toughening-up effect of the
881 nkumbi is salutary, though they openly deplore and frequently reject
• 885 its severity. And when this particular nkumbi was over, the change
177 in every one of the eight boys was plain to see. But this is not their *major reason for allowing themselves* to be subjected to village initiation, nor is there any question of their being subjected by force. They enter the nkumbi voluntarily because they are a proud people. They live necessarily in contact with the villagers and spend a number of weeks every year either in a village or among villagers. The latter regard any adult who is not initiated as a child; he is treated with no more respect, accorded no more privileges, and he cannot take part in any adult activities. By entering the nkumbi the Pygmies prove their adulthood to the villagers the only way they can. When the initiation was over even Sansiwake had the right to enter any adult baraza and take part in the proceedings. This is what the Pygmies want from the nkumbi, and what they get—the status of adults in village eyes.

P There are many things in their behavior to show that the nkumbi
881 means no more than this to them, quite apart from their deliberate
882 lack of respect for the laws of the nkumbi and their irreverence to-
177 ward everything that is sacred to the villager. When this particular nkumbi was over and everyone returned to the forest, the same boys who had been walking freely among the men of the village, as men, went straight back to their mothers. They became children once more

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

and were accorded none of the privileges of the adult forest Pygmy. Above all, they were not allowed to take part in the singing of the men's molimo songs. They may have become adults in the village, but in the forest they were still children.

Far from illustrating the dependence of the Pygmies upon the villagers, the nkumbi illustrates better than anything else the complete opposition of the forest to the village. The Pygmies in the forest consciously and energetically reject all village values. When they are in the village they temporarily adopt its values and customs, not wanting to desecrate their sacred forest values by bringing them into the village. That is why they never sing their sacred songs in the village the way they do in the forest, and why they refuse to consecrate the nkumbi with special music, although every other event of importance in their lives is marked in this way. There is an unbridgeable gulf between the two worlds of the two peoples.

The Pygmies have their own way of growing naturally into adulthood. A boy proves himself capable of supporting a family when he kills his first real game, and proves himself a man when he participates in the elima.

During the whole nkumbi there was only one Pygmy who showed the slightest fear of the consequences of the blatant disregard everyone else showed for the laws of the villagers. That was Aberi, father of Sansiwake—Aberi the ugly, Aberi who was so often the laughingstock of his fellows. It was not that he was afraid of the villagers as people, for after his son's illness he often used to walk right among the instructors and drag his Sansiwake away if he felt they were being too severe with him. And he was as outspoken as any against any mistreatment of the children by the villagers. He particularly criticized Sabani for causing his son's illness. Sabani and the other instructors told Aberi it was a terrible thing to do to criticize the nkumbi doctor.

Not long afterward Aberi became ill. He was so ill that he could